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For Immediate Release

Montana Colleges and Universities Participate in Organ Donation Registration Challenge

-Launches Monday, April 19 -

(serve.mt.gov)

Helena –The Governor’s Office of Community Service (serve.mt.gov) announced today that 17 colleges and universities across Montana will participate in a challenge to register the most organ, eye and tissue donors. The *Donate Life Today* Registry Challenge events will be held **the week of April 19 – April 23**.

Max TeSoro, is currently a 16-year-old student from Sentinel High School in Missoula – he received a liver transplant in the summer of 2004.

“Max was in the midst of enjoying life when he suddenly became ill and was diagnosed with acute liver failure,” said Sherie TeSoro, Max’s mom. “Because of the severity of his illness, he was placed at the top of the waiting list. If he did not receive a transplant quickly, he was going die. A liver became available weeks later, saving his life. Today, Max is a normal teenager, having fun with his English class, drama and skiing. The most astonishing thing is that none of this would have been possible without the generous decision of a donor family,” said Mrs. TeSoro.

The public is encouraged to register in person on campus, or take 5 minutes to register online at serve.mt.gov.

The *Donate Life Today* Registry Challenge (donatelifetoday.com) is sponsored by Montana Campus Compact (mtcompact.org), the state’s largest higher education network and host organization of the Campus Corps AmeriCorps programs. Montana Campus Corps is supported by the Governor’s Office of Community Service (serve.mt.gov) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (nationalservice.gov). Registry challenge events will be led by Montana Campus Corps AmeriCorps members.

“More than 220 people in Montana are currently waiting for organ transplants. Sadly, many of them will die waiting,” said Josh Vanek, Network Services Director for Montana Campus Compact.

For the *Donate Life Today* Registry Challenge Montana campuses will compete in three categories; small, medium and large, based on enrollment. Winners of the Registry Challenge will be announced on May 3, 2010 and will receive a \$500 cash prize that can be used for hosting a campus-community volunteer recognition event or may be donated to a local charity aligned with the mission of *Donate Life Today*.

“Last year, 63 lives were saved by 15 Montana organ donors,” said Kevin O’Connor, President/CEO of LifeCenter Northwest, the designated organ procurement organization for Montana. “In 2009, the Montana Campus Compact registration challenge resulted in several hundred Montanans either registering to be an organ, eye and tissue donor or re-affirming their registration. One donor can make a profound impact on the lives of countless others who are waiting for transplants,” O’Connor said.

Online Information and Registration at: serve.mt.gov

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